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Xwáyxway

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Xʷáɣxʷay¹

Back to the bush
molding me back to human
I follow a path up a hill,
the windy reach of trees
loosening, combing out
knots of urban stress
roots, stones, pinecones, nuts
massaging the soles of my feet
I stop at my destination, Beaver Lake,
the acclaimed jewel, and part
heavy curtains of cattails
I see no turtles, geese, herons or song birds
only a few ducks standing on a log
on the crusty beach
The lake is drowning in water lilies
placed there years ago, a sign says,
to beautify it for the Queen's Jubilee
I imagine a parting of the White Princesses
and Snow Whites, the lake revived
teeming with wildlife—back to the treasure
of the Coast Salish
my white skin like birch skin
for writing on, painting on

ANDREA NICKI is the author of two books of poetry, *Welcoming* (Inanna Press, 2009) and *Noble Orphan* (Demeter Press, 2014). A new collection is forthcoming with Mago Books.

¹ Xʷáɣxʷay is a Sḵwɣwú7mesh (Squamish) village site located in what is now known as Stanley Park in Vancouver, a city on unceded Coast Salish Territory. The area was known as Xʷáɣxʷay for thousands of years.